My dear Tom. Rome 20 Oct. 1869

There's a little pretty matter which gives me the pleasure of a scribble to you. An English Lady Miss Buschman in great tribulation came & paid & quoted you as to knowing her or rather some mutual f^d of the name of Bownall. — Her money letters were detained at the post as she was without a passport having been with f^d in whose Pass^t she was registered —

Now there was nothing less than for me for me to say I knew her & in fact be responsible for the sum to the post — whereas I did not know her a bit & her account of you was ambiguous — It was afterwards that she mentioned M^r Bownal

Yet with all as I am here to do good I at once complied & wrote on the Post Order to come to England again?

& she received the money at once & wrote me a charming & grateful letter & I have no doubt she is a real person & will tell me so

But my Secretary's were disturbed at my doing such mad things as the Post would pounce upon me for the whole sum if the Lady should turn out not real

Yet I do these things continually & have never been taken in but once but I confess that the position I am in is agitating at times for just think this poor Lady was penniless!!!

I hope you got the money on the 2d from the P.O. & I wrote to dear Maria that it shall never happen again as at the end of the year I make all straight with something in pocket, but I am astonished that I have ever been able to screw out so large a sum as a thousand pounds for the 50 Shares of the Roman water, but its all safe & the water is to arrive next month - the company already pay me £50 a year interest - Then the thing has done great good to my Roman fame for my

patronage has had much to do with the success
of the Spec so dont tremble for me any more
I confess that I find myself with more talent
than I reckon on - when the thing comes, somehow
I call up a capacity or & at times a really
good one —— I am glad to tell you that I am
so much recovered & recovering, that I can
walk 2 miles & get up from my chair, indeed
I feel a new creature for my suffering has been
very great altho I did my best to keep it
secret for my enemies were ravenous to
devour me, but I have beaten 'em all, my wit
was equal to the task & the P. O. answered their
4 large sheets of closely written charges against
me " that they were all void of foundation - my
hands are too weak for me to sharpen my fingers
but I am still amazed that such things can
be done, considering the amount of good I do
that I have no occasion to do
these cruel doings have not yet done me much
harm, my nerves are at times ~~are~~ affected & I
droop — Sorry I am that I am to be alone &
Mrs Ryland the good nurse declares the expence
of the journeys is equal to 1/2 a years keep for

is suffering from Gout which is more painful – The other day the Finance minister asked me about my Gout – O! I said the Gout belongs to Ambassadors but 'tis rheumatism only that sticks to the poor Consuls" – but Tom is fortunate that it does not extend to his hands, for my fingers are still crooked & I am able to play but so so on my piano forte get enough to amuse me – You see I can write well & I can paint & my knife & fork I can manage like a hero – at first I could not hold them at all, my dinner had to be cut up – 'Tis a charming triumph over my enemies that I have got well & look well which is a great matter for in the Autumn some of the Newspapers killed me, yet now I am more alive than ever – 'Tis essential that I conceal my age but people know that 'tis 44 years since I came first to Rome & so express astonishment as I find that I go for 50 !! what a go, so I do all I can to conceal that I am infirm – aye & succeed! ha! ha!

I hear charming news of Marian that she is a Scotland starving it with her Mother really I shall soon be jealous that Tom is doing more for his children than I have been able to do for mine – but I wont complain tho' my dear Claudia is I fear sinking she is at times with Eleanor attending her & growing going backward & forward to the Chicks, poor dear Claudia & yet I think if she could have come out to me 2 or 3 years ago it might have saved her – her destiny is cruel with 7 dear ones

Now you'll say I am a greater chatterer than ever but as you wrote such a charming letter I have been trying to come up to it, but 'tis impossible, for I have only my old bachelor self to write about, whereas you have at hand all those dear Tom ones to exult in – Your loving Joe